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The Matchmakers

A Play

BY

SEUMAS O'KELLY

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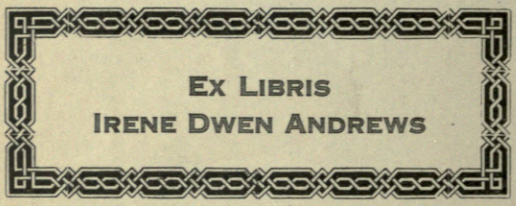
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Irene Dwen Andrews

THE MATCHMAKERS

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT,

BY

SEUMAS O'KELLY.

NEW EDITION.

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DUBLIN
THE TALBOT PRESS, LTD.
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CHARACTERS :—

LARRY DOLAN	...	... A Matchmaker.
MRS. DOLAN	...	... His Wife.
MARY NOONAN	...	... His Niece.
TOM O'CONNOR	...	... Another Matchmaker.
SEAN O'CONNOR	...	... His Brother.
KATE MULVANY	...	... A Neighbour.

The action takes place in DOLAN'S Kitchen.

For right of production on the Stage of this Comedy application should be made to M. O'KELLY, Editor "Leinster Leader," Naas, Co. Kildare.

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THE MATCHMAKERS

IN ONE ACT

THE MATCHMAKERS.

SCENE :—INTERIOR OF DOLAN'S KITCHEN. OPEN FIREPLACE TO LEFT. ROOM DOOR TO LEFT, IN BACKGROUND. ENTRANCE HALF-DOOR IN BACKGROUND, TO RIGHT. BETWEEN ROOM DOOR AND KITCHEN DOOR THERE IS AN OLD-FASHIONED SETTLE. OVER THE SETTLE A SMALL WINDOW. BESIDE THE ROOM DOOR A SMALL MIRROR IS SET IN THE WALL. A WOMAN'S CLOAK HANGS UPON A PEG NEAR THE MIRROR. AT RIGHT, IN THE FOREGROUND, A DRESSER, WELL STOCKED WITH DELPH. OUT FROM THE FIRE A SMALL TABLE. THERE ARE CHAIRS BESIDE FIRE AND TABLE. LARRY DOLAN IS SITTING BESIDE THE FIRE. MRS. DOLAN ON OUTSIDE OF WINDOW BUSILY ENGAGED CLEANING IT. MARY NOONAN, A GIRL WITH ONE HAND (THE LEFT), ENTERS FROM ROOM DOOR AND CROSSES TO DRESSER. SHE TAKES DOWN SOME DEPLH AND RETURNS TO ROOM. WHILE SHE DOES SO SHE SINGS SOFTLY A SNATCH OF A LOVE BALLAD. MRS. DOLAN GOES FROM WINDOW AND ENTERS THROUGH HALF-DOOR TO RIGHT.

MRS. DOLAN :—I want to have everything nice and tidy against the O'Connors come up.

LARRY :—They can't be very long now.

MRS. DOLAN (NODDING AT ROOM DOOR) :—Mary is setting the table for a meal in the room.

LARRY :—It'll be a merry meal.

MRS. DOLAN :—By all accounts she's getting a decent man in Sean O'Connor.

LARRY (RUBBING HIS HANDS DELIGHTEDLY) :—Of all matches I ever had a hand in this will bang Banagher.

MRS. DOLAN :—It'll be well belled over the country, any way.

LARRY :—So best.

MRS. DOLAN :—Not alone that, but it'll be put into every letter that goes to New York for six months after. Over America, Asia and Africa the news will be as fast as the steamers can leg with it.
(SHE GOES FROM DRESSER AND SWEEPS NEAR THE DOOR WITH A BROOM).

LARRY (DELIGHTEDLY) :—That's it, that's it. I want it sent everywhere the wandering Gael has found a foothold. It'll be the greatest match was ever heard tell of. Tom O'Connor will never forget it. He has made many matches in his day, but he'll have to play second fiddle to Larry Dolan after this.

MRS. DOLAN (LEAVING BROOM BEHIND THE DOOR AND DRAWING NEAR TO LARRY) :—You were'nt telling me how you met him first ?

LARRY :—Wasn't I ? It's easy to be telling it. This Tom O'Connor conceits himself one of the greatest matchmakers that ever stood in the country. But like a lot of other things in the world the sorra woman he ever took himself. Living up on the side of the hill he is with his brother Sean. They're like a pair of lonely old crows that'd be croaking up on a tree.

MRS. DOLAN :—That's a poor way for anyone to be.

LARRY :—Well, that's the way they're cocked up for themselves on Derrybrien. Sean thought to get a woman, but not one of them would touch him with a tongs by reason of his legs. A pair of the bandiest legs he has under him that ever were seen.

MRS. DOLAN :—They let him walk too young. That's what left him as he is.

LARRY :—Anyhow, the women have notions against him over it. One day coming from the fair I

met his brother Tom, and he having a big overcoat under his oxter. From the hand-me-down men he bought it for next to nothing. So he up and told me he was going to put Sean into the big coat to hide his bandy legs and make his match with some suitable woman.

MRS. DOLAN :—A nice thing for him to turn round and go do to his brother. Matchmakers like himself and yourself have no shame in you.

LARRY :—It's many a good man and a good woman would go down to their graves unknown to each other only the matchmakers bringing them together.

MRS. DOLAN :—Maybe so.

LARRY :—Well, after leaving Tom O'Connor I began to think over it for myself. "He's a smart man," says I, "but there's as smart as him knocking about." So I thought of my niece, Mary. She'd get many a good man only she having but the one hand in the world. The men have notions against her over it. And she one of the finest housekeepers that ever laid a broom to the floor.

MRS. DOLAN :—If it was the will of God to give her but the one hand itself He put the strength of two into it. God never yet closed a gap that He didn't open up another.

LARRY :—Well, I bethought to myself that if Tom O'Connor put Sean into an overcoat to hide his bandy feet that I'd best put Mary into a cloak to cover her one hand. So I put the cloak upon her and in with me to the fair. We met the O'Connors on the green, and Sean in his cóta mor. I up and told Tom I was willing to marry Mary to Sean. He jumped at the offer. In half an hour the whole match was sealed, signed, and delivered.

MRS. DOLAN :—I don't know what to say to it at all.

LARRY :—As suitable a match as ever was made. If you were to see Sean and Mary fidgeting and blushing like a pair of two year olds!

MRS. DOLAN :—And they never suspected?

LARRY :—Not they. I wound it up as fast as I decently could. (STANDING UP WITH HIS BACK TO THE FIRE AND PUTTING HIS HANDS UNDER HIS COAT TAILS). If Tom O'Connor was ready to play a game on whatever woman didn't know about his brother's legs, it's no crime for me to play a game on whatever man didn't know about my niece's hand. All's fair in love and war, as the saying goes.

MRS. DOLAN :—And won't it be nice now, when the O'Connors find out that Mary has but one hand ?

LARRY (WALKING TOWARDS WINDOW AT BACK) :—They won't find out until she's Mrs. Sean O'Connor. Tom says he'll marry Sean in the top coat, and I said to myself I'd marry Mary in her fine cloak.

MRS. DOLAN :—But Tom O'Connor told you about Sean's legs.

LARRY :—If he was fool enough to show his cards that's his own affair.

MRS. DOLAN :—You were always a man to play a strong hand.

LARRY (COMING FROM WINDOW TO FIREPLACE) :—It's like Kate Mulvany I see coming up by the paddock, I asked her to take a chase down to witness the marriage agreement to-day.

MRS. DOLAN :—She's an honest decent girl.

LARRY :—A bit sharp with the tongue betimes.

MRS. DOLAN :—She's one of the best-hearted neighbours a body ever had.

LARRY :—She can be as bitter as a wasp.

MRS. DOLAN :—She's a girl that'll always find a warm welcome in this house.

LARRY :—It's in her nature to have a sting in the tongue. Only for Mary asking me she'd never be let into the family secrets.

MRS. DOLAN :—Mary was right to have her. I must run and give her the kindly welcome. (SHE GOES TO DOOR AND WAVES HER HAND). God save you, Kate. (SHE RETURNS TO HOUSE AND SITS ON SETTLE AT BACK). The Bank of Ireland you could trust with Kate Mulvany.

(AFTER A LITTLE PAUSE KATE MULVANY ENTERS. SHE IS A ROBUST, SELF-POSSESSED WOMAN, AND DIRECT IN HER SPEECH AND BEARING).

KATE :—God and Mary to all in this house.

MRS. DOLAN :—You, too ; you, too.

(MRS. DOLAN TAKES THE SHAWL KATE WEARS ON HER SHOULDERS AND HANGS IT UPON A PEG).

LARRY (SWEETLY) :—We sent for you, Kate, as the best of our neighbours to witness a little bit of a marriage agreement between Mary and Sean O'Connor.

KATE :—I'm obliged to you, Larry. And they'll have my seven blessings on the top of it.

LARRY :—I was just saying to herself that you were the one neighbour we could trust. You're not one to blabber about it all over the country.

KATE (WITH A LITTLE CURTSEY IN WHICH THERE IS A TRACE OF MOCKERY) :—I'm beholden to you.

LARRY :—You're a woman that knows how to keep a quiet tongue in your cheek.

KATE :—And a quick tongue when I like, Larry.

MRS. DOLAN :—There isn't such a big secret in it as all that, is there ?

LARRY :—Not at all. Only you wouldn't like to give people the satisfaction of knowing more than was good for them.

MRS. DOLAN :—People do be talking a lot about their neighbour's affairs round these parts.

KATE :—And what they don't know won't trouble them.

LARRY :—That's just it.

KATE :—Well, I must say that Mary is deserving of her fortune.

MRS. DOLAN :—None of us begrudge her the best luck that comes her way. She's within in the room making preparations for a meal.

KATE :—She'd want to hurry, then. I think it's the O'Connors I saw driving up the bog road.

(MRS. DOLAN AND LARRY BECOME EXCITED).

MRS. DOLAN :—The Lord save us ! Have a care but it is. (SHE RUSHES TO THE DOOR).

LARRY (GOING TO WINDOW) :—It's the bog road they'd be apt to take.

KATE :—They were coming fair and easy.

MRS. DOLAN :—It's the O'Connors for certain.

LARRY :—I'd know the mare. Always going between a walk and a trot.

KATE :—Horses from Derrybrien were never known to go but the one old gait.

MRS. DOLAN (CALLING) :—Mary ! Mary !

LARRY :—Are you there, Mary ?

MARY (COMING FROM ROOM) :—What ails you ? Good-morrow, Kate.

MRS. DOLAN :—Here are the O'Connors in on the top of us !

MARY :—The O'Connors ! I never thought they'd be up so early in the day.

LARRY :—Why wouldn't they be in a hurry and Sean getting such a woman as yourself ?

KATE :—It's a wonder to me that Sean wasn't up around the place when the first of the larks was shaking the dew from his wings.

LARRY (TAKING THE CLAOK FROM WALL) :—Hurry on with your cloak, girl alive.

MARY :—For what would I be putting on my cloak ?

LARRY :—You'll be more pleasing to his sight with it upon you.

MRS. DOLAN :—Let him have his way.

MARY :—There isn't much use in going against him.

(LARRY HELPS HER ON HURRIEDLY WITH THE CLOAK. HE RETARDS HER WITH HIS CLUMSINESS).

LARRY :—I saw many women in my day, but never the equal of Mary with a cloak upon her.

KATE (ALSO HELPING HER) :—It's the way she carries it.

MRS. DOLAN :—Why wouldn't she look elegant in it, and the handful of money that was paid for that cloak ?

KATE :—And what sort is Sean at all, Mary ?

MARY (EXCITEDLY) :—Dear knows I couldn't rightly tell you, Kate. He was muffled up in a cóta mor like a graineog in his quills. Nothing but his head sticking out over the collar.

LARRY :—If it was your first time to see him itself I could tell by you that he wasn't displeasing to your sight.

MARY :—I didn't know whether I was on my head or my heels when they began to make the match up.

LARRY (SURVEYING HER WITH THE CLOAK ON) :—There's a picture of a woman for you.

(HE WALKS TO FIREPLACE).

MARY (GOING TO MIRROR WITH KATE TO FIX HER HAIR AND THE HOOD UPON HER HEAD) :—I'm shaking in every limb with the dint of excitement.

KATE (GOING TO THE DOOR) :—The car is a good bit down the road yet.

(MARY GOES TO THE ROOM AND RUSHES BACK TO THE GLASS AGAIN. MRS. DOLAN BUSIES HERSELF AT THE DRESSER. LARRY STANDS WITH HIS BACK TO FIREPLACE).

LARRY :—Ah, woman, make haste.

MRS. DOLAN :—They'll be in on us any minute.

MARY :—It's tormented I am with that one wisp of hair over my forehead. Bad manners to it, I can never get it but to be streeling down like the tail of a peacock that'd be moulting in the autumn.

(KATE GOES FROM DOOR TO ASSIST MARY AT THE GLASS).

LARRY :—'Tisn't the wisp of hair the like of Sean O'Connor will be taking stock of.

KATE :—You could never tell. The notions some men take beat the world.

LARRY :—Hurry on out of that!

MARY :—I'm hurrying my best.

LARRY :—What titivating you have this hour of your life.

MRS. DOLAN :—You'll get no good of that wisp of hair. It's only the cow's lick over your forehead.

KATE :—Kind mother for her to have it.

MARY :—It's a poor case for a body to be going helter-skelter at anything.

LARRY :—Helter-skelter with you out of that!

MARY :—Oh, glory be to! if I wasn't forgetting me glove! (SHE RUSHES INTO THE ROOM).

LARRY :—Forgot her glove ! Did anyone ever hear the like ? A woman with only a kithogue to her carcase and she looking for a glove to put upon it.

MRS. DOLAN :—It's a nice way you have for talking of your niece. Why wouldn't she if it went to that ?

KATE :—If you had only one foot wouldn't you put a boot upon it ?

MARY (RUNNING OUT ROOM DOOR TO THE GLASS) :—I'm not worth a farthing ! There was me silver brooch within in the room, and I forgetting all about it only I went for the glove.

LARRY (SARCASTICALLY) :—Take care you aren't forgetting your watch and chain.

MRS. DOLAN :—Leave her alone.

LARRY :—Or your elastic boots with kid spats over them.

MARY :—You have my head moidered.

LARRY :—Or your silk scarf.

KATE :—Silks or satins would be nothing new to her.

LARRY :—Or your gold bangles to be rattling on your kithogue like a jailor with a bundle of keys.

MARY :—The Lord be giving me patience with him.

LARRY :—Or your eighteen carat ring—or your emerald ear rings—or your red sunshade—or your diamond necklace—or your ivory walking-stick—or your locket with the pearls—or your—

MARY :—I'll have to fly.

(VOICES ARE HEARD OUTSIDE).

KATE :—Here they are !

MARY :—And I looking like a tramp that'd be streeling over the country !

(ENTER TOM AND SEAN O'CONNOR. LARRY AND MRS. DOLAN SHAKE HANDS EFFUSIVELY WITH THEM. SEAN WEARING AN OVERCOAT REACHING TO HIS ANKLES).

MRS. DOLAN :—You're heartily welcome.

LARRY :—How's every bone in your body ?

TOM O'CONNOR :—Finely, thank you, finely.

SEAN O'CONNOR :—God save all here but the cat.

LARRY :—You, too ; you, too.

MRS. DOLAN (RUNNING TO PUT CHAIRS AT THE FIRE) :—Sit down and rest yourselves. Fatigued out and out you must be after your journey.

TOM :—Thanks, ma'am, thanks.

SEAN (SHAKING HANDS WITH MARY) :—Isn't it the fine weather we're having for the time of year ?

MARY :—The best, thank God, the best.

MRS. DOLAN :—This is a neighbour of ours, a girl of the Mulvanys.

(TOM AND SEAN SKAKE HANDS WITH KATE).

TOM :—I'm proud to meet you.

KATE :—Not half as proud as I am to have a hand in this match.

LARRY (SLYLY ELBOWING SEAN) :—The kithogue Mary gave you, Sean. The nearest the heart.

SEAN :—Well, well, am'nt I as stupid as an owl and as blind as a bat never to notice it !

(SEAN HEARTILY SHAKES MARY'S KITHOGUE AGAIN, AND THE TWO OF THEM SIT DOWN ON SETTLE IN THE BACKGROUND).

MRS. DOLAN :—The sorra much can pass unknown to Larry.

KATE :—I heard the schoolmaster saying once that if it was only a bird that lit on the road outside Larry should be to the door to see what colour were the feathers in his wings. From a child he was like that.

LARRY :—I don't deny it at all.

TOM :—You couldn't deny it, man alive. Sure, anyone that'd look at the woman of the house could see that you had a clear and a fine eye in your head.

MRS. DOLAN :—Ah, there's the plamas now for you.

TOM :—There isn't a word of a lie in it.

KATE :—There was never yet one brought up in Derrybrien that hadn't the plamas soft upon the tongue.

MRS. DOLAN :—'Tis in their seed, breed and generation up there.

TOM :—It's the plain honest truth I'm telling.

LARRY :—But sure he has twice as clear and as fine an eye in his own head. He has never yet met the woman that could please him.

TOM :—'Tisn't that at all. I had so many other men and so many other women to be pleasing, making up their matches, that I had no time to do a turn for myself at all.

KATE :—There's more of it for you. And half the women of the barony breaking their hearts and wearing the boots off their feet after him.

MRS. DOLAN :—Don't be going on with your humbugging now. Draw down to the fire. (SPEAKING IN A LOW, CONFIDENTIAL VOICE). Won't you be taking a small sup to warm you after your journey?

TOM (RAISING HIS HANDS AND SHAKING HIS HEAD DEPRECATINGLY) :—I never touch anything, ma'am —while the sun is in the heavens.

MRS. DOLAN :—And you, Sean?

SEAN :—I never touch it myself—sun, moon or stars.

KATE :—Faith, then, you're getting a pattern of a man, Mary.

LARRY :—Go on out of that. Fill us out something, Mary Ellen.

TOM :—Don't press me, ma'am. It isn't a bit of use. Later on we might be talking about it.

KATE :—Don't force them. I was never one to back up coercion in any shape or form.

LARRY :—We brought our friend, Kate, up to witness the marriage agreement with herself.

TOM :—That's right. The sooner the business is over the quicker we can be taking our pleasure.

LARRY (WALKING OVER TO DRESSER, WHERE HE STANDS ON A CHAIR, SEARCHING BEHIND DISHES ON THE SHELVES) :—I have the agreement drawn up, ready to sign. A lawyer's lad set it all down as plain as a pikestaff.

TOM :—That's the talk.

LARRY (WHO HAS NOT DISCOVERED DOCUMENT, IN ALARM) :—Where is it? I could take my oath I put it there.

MRS. DOLAN (WHO HAS BEEN WATCHING HIM WITH DISAPPROVAL) :— A nice place you were trusting it to. Leaving it open to the robbers of the world.

LARRY (ANGRILY) : —Where is it?

MRS. DOLAN (TAKING BLUE DOCUMENT FROM HER BOSOM): —I put it with my purse. Maybe the lives of generations depending upon it.

(LARRY TAKES DOCUMENT, GOES TO TABLE, AND PUTS ON HIS SPECTACLES).

LARRY :—The copper-plate hand he set it all out in is the finest was ever seen.

MRS. DOLAN :—While you're reading it I'll be looking after the things inside.

(SHE GOES INTO ROOM).

LARRY (SMOOTHING OUT DOCUMENT) :—Are you listening to me, Sean ?

SEAN (STARTING FROM HIS WHISPERINGS WITH MARY) :—Yes, I see you. That's right.

KATE :—Sorra listening at all was he. Colloguing there with Mary he's on for.

TOM :—It's time for him to have more sense, then.

LARRY :—The heart is young with him.

KATE :—And warm with him.

LARRY :—And with her.

KATE :—And warm with us all.

LARRY :—Aye, is it, thank God. Have an ear on ye all now, while I read this out.

TOM (DRAWING HIS CHAIR UP TO THE TABLE, SO THAT HE CAN READ THE DOCUMENT) :—And an eye on us as well. I'm a man that always likes to see with my own two eyes and to hear with my own two ears language that comes from a lawyer.

MARY :—You're a right man.

KATE :—He is just. There were them houseful of O'Hara girls that lost their fine place over something a lawyer put in a deed for their father before they were born. And they not to know a bit about it until he was laid in his grave. Out on the waves of the world everyone of them had to go.

LARRY :—And they badly able to battle with it.

KATE :—Sure how could they, the crathurs, and they brought up not to do a hand's turn beyond talking French and knitting antimacassars ?

LARRY (COUGHING IMPRESSIVELY) :—Here, now, is the marriage settlement.

(HE BEGINS TO READ FROM DOCUMENT AND POINTS OUT SOLEMNLY WITH HIS FINGER EACH OF THE PERSONS CONCERNED ACCORDING AS THE NAME CROPS UP. AT MENTION OF HIS OWN NAME HE TAPS HIMSELF ON THE CHEST).

"This Indenture witnesseth an agreement of marriage between John O'Connor, of the parish of Derrybrien, townland of Ail, barony of Kiltescill, and county of Galway, and Mary Noonan, of the parish of Kilmeen, townland of Meeleen, barony of Kilreecle, and County of Galway, of the first part; and of Thomas Michael O'Connor, and Laurence Joseph Jarlath Francis Sylvester Dolan of the second part——"

KATE (INTERRUPTING) :—Ah, who's he?

LARRY (BLANDLY) :—That's me.

KATE :—And when and where did you get the like of that of a name?

LARRY :—I got one half of it at the Baptismal font and the other at Confirmation.

KATE :—Out of the Litany of the Saints your mother must have got the names to put upon you.

LARRY :—I suppose it was, then.

KATE :—Well, the longer we live the more we know.

LARRY (RESUMING HIS READING) :—"Of the second part, do hereby jointly and severally bind themselves, that the said John O'Connor do take in marriage the said Mary Noonan, and that the said Mary Noonan do take as lawful husband the said John O'Connor, and that in consideration of said lawful marriage of the said John O'Connor and Mary Noonan, the said Thomas Michael O'Connor do give as dowry the sum of £85 to his brother, the said John O'Connor, and that the said Laurence Joseph Jarlath Francis Sylvester Dolan do give as marriage dowry to his niece, the said Mary Noonan, six head of fat cattle, two chests of household linen, a sum of £80 in current coin of the realm, and that he do pay such sums and monies as may be incurred by the performance of the marriage rite in any way whatsoever."

TOM :—It doesn't say how much that will be.

LARRY :—No, it does not.

TOM :—I'd like to have figures down for everything. There's no getting over plain figures.

LARRY :—It's a matter between the curate and myself. It'll be nothing in or out of your pocket no matter what the figure is.

KATE :—The curate won't be too hard on you, Larry.

LARRY :—Let ye listen to the discourse, until I have it finished, and then I'll be glad to have everybody's views. (RESUMING HIS READING) :—" Be it further agreed upon, jointly and severally, that the said John O'Connor and Mary Noonan, being united legally and lawfully in wedlock, do have the right of residence in the house of the said Thomas Michael O'Connor, situate in the parish of Derrybrien, townland of Ail, barony of Kiltescill, and County of Galway, and that they possess and hold half the monies, goods, and chattels of the house and farm owned by the said Thomas Michael O'Connor, during the course of his natural life, and that after the death of the said Thomas Michael O'Connor "— We'll be all very sorry when you die, Tom, but we must make provision for everything. What I say is, remember the O'Hara case.

TOM :—Faith, you're plucking me well in life and going to salt me when I'm dead.

KATE :—Don't heed that. You might bury half of us yet.

TOM :—I hope I'll bury some of ye, anyhow.

LARRY (CHEERFULLY) :—Please God you will, Tom. (RESUMING HIS READING) :—" And that after the death of the said Thomas Michael O'Connor all the household goods, monies, farm, chattels and property then in his possession do become the rightful and lawful property of the said John O'Connor and said Mary Noonan and for the benefit, right, use and enjoyment of them and their posterity. That we do each and severally bind ourselves to execute and discharge the several and joint obligations set forth in this Indenture. And that a breach of any or all of these several and joint

obligations by all or any party to the deed do render the conditions herein set forth for ever null and void." That's the whole thing now, only the space for signing the names.

KATE :—Well, it's the height of fine language, anyhow, if there isn't much means mentioned itself.

TOM :—Yes, everything is set down fair and square as we agreed.

LARRY (LEAVING THE AGREEMENT ON THE TABLE) :—Come on, now, and sign it here. Then we can turn to our pleasure. Herself has something for us in the room.

TOM :—Hold on a minute, now, It's just as well for us go the right way about things. Where are the six head of fat cattle grazing ?

LARRY :—A good quarter of a mile from the gate outside. Below in the bottoms they're grazing.

TOM (WITHOUT LOOKING BACK) :—Sean, Sean.

(SEAN PAYS NO ATTENTION TO HIM).

Are you there, Sean ? Come here.

SEAN (WITHOUT STIRRING) :—What is it ?

TOM :—You're a better judge of stock than I am. We can sign this when you satisfy yourself about the cattle.

LARRY :—They're well fit to be seen by the best judge that ever stood over a horn.

TOM :—Sure I know that well. There's no offence meant. Just to have things done fair and square.

KATE :—Fair and square is the best way when all is said and done. It's better to be sure than sorry.

LARRY :—Don't fancy I want to put any objection in your way. He's welcome to see them. They're shaking with fat from hoof to horn.

SEAN :—All right. I'll cast an eye over them.

LARRY :—Herself will show the way down. (CALLING) :—Are you there, Mary Ellen ?

KATE :—And Mary might as well be with them, too.

MARY :—The walk won't do any of us much harm.

LARRY :—Not a ha'porth.

(ENTER MRS. DOLAN).

LARRY :—Show Sean the way down to the bottoms. He wants to see the fat cattle.

MRS. DOLAN :—To be sure I will and welcome.

LARRY :—Make as little delay as you can.

SEAN :—We won't be too long.

(EXIT SEAN, MARY, AND MRS. DOLAN. KATE MULVANY ACCOMPANIES THEM A STEP OUTSIDE THE DOOR, WHERE SHE IS SEEN GESTICULATING WITH THE OTHERS AND ENDEAVOURING TO SUPPRESS HER MERRIMENT. SHE STRAIGHTENS HERSELF UP AND STEPS INTO THE HOUSE WITH A SERIOUS FACE).

LARRY DOLAN (PULLING HIS CHAIR TO THE FIRE) :—You're a cautious man, Tom.

TOM (SITTING UP ON THE TABLE) :—I'm like yourself in that respect, Larry.

LARRY :—I'm sorry, Kate, that we have to be delaying you for a start.

KATE (SITTING ON A CHAIR BETWEEN THE TWO MEN, AND A BIT BEHIND THEM) :—I'm in no hurry in the world. I'd go farther out of my way to oblige you.

LARRY (LIGHTING HIS PIPE) :—I know you would, Kate.

KATE (LOOKING DOWN DEMURELY) :—And sure it isn't every day a body can be a witness to a match like this. Your brother (TURNING SWEETLY TO TOM) is a great long while looking for a woman.

TOM :—The one he is getting was worth waiting twice as long for.

LARRY :—That's the truth, anyway. And I say it if I'm her uncle and guardian itself.

KATE (INSINUATINGLY) :—And anything like the big coat he has on him I never saw the beat of.

TOM :—He had a heavy cold, and so I bought the coat for him. A man would need to be minding himself when he's going to turn round and enter the blessed state of matrimony.

KATE (STILL SWEETLY) :—You're a caution for excuses.

LARRY (COUGHING AND TRYING TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT) :—Did you hear what happened to the widow Dwyer's mare this morning?

TOM (INTERESTEDLY) :—She met with a great mishap, I hear ?

KATE (IGNORING LARRY AND ADDRESSING TOM MORE EMPHATICALLY) :—You're a caution for excuses. Sean has no more a heavy cold on him than I have.

TOM (SHARPLY) :—I'm surprised to hear the like of this from you.

LARRY (UNEASILY) :—It's only a joke Kate is having. She's fond of a joke.

TOM (SWINGING HIS FEET IMPATIENTLY) :—We're all fond of a joke.

KATE :—So we are, and maybe some of us too fond of joking. But I'm not joking at all.

LARRY :—Let it all pass. There's no harm done. As I was saying about the widow Dwyer's mare—

KATE (HITCHING HERSELF UP IN HER CHAIR AND STILL ADDRESSING TOM) :—I'm no joke or joker at all. I'm in dead earnest. You're brother has no more a heavy cold on him than I have.

TOM :—Then is it a liar you want to be making me out ?

LARRY (HURRIEDLY) :—Not at all, Tom. Kate said nothing of the kind. You're making a mistake. Kate never called anyone a liar in her life.

KATE (SHOWING SIGNS OF FIGHT) :—You've put the right word on it, Tom O'Connor. A liar you are, and I'm saying it to your face.

TOM (WITHERINGLY) :—You're a lady, Miss Mulvany.

KATE :—And you're a gentleman, Mr. O'Connor.

LARRY (MILDLY) :—I'm surprised to hear this turn from you, Kate.

KATE :—You needn't then, Larry.

LARRY :—Greatly surprised.

KATE (SWEEPINGLY) :—A nice parcel of liars ye are to bring a poor woman like me up to witness a marriage agreement with a man having a pair of legs under him so bandy that, be the powers, you could drive a coach and four out between them.

LARRY (ALARMED) :—My goodness, gracious, Kate——

TOM (LOOKING UNEASILY TOWARDS THE DOOR) :—Talk easy, woman alive.

KATE (ARROGANTLY) :—As easy and as hard as I like. Making a match with a woman that thinks he has a pair of natural legs under him.

LARRY (REPROVINGLY) :—Kate, Kate.

KATE :—You ought to be ashamed of yourselves. Putting Sean O'Connor into a big coat to hide the legs. And she not knowing a taste about it.

TOM (RUBBING HIS HANDS OVER HIS KNEES NERVOUSLY) : —The cat is well out of the bag now.

LARRY :—If it went to that, it's neither a sin or a crime.

KATE :—It's both a sin and a crime and a shame. (STANDING UP FROM HER CHAIR AND SWINGING IT AWAY FROM HER). A pair of barefaced imposters.

TOM (WITH A FORCED LAUGH) :—A nice witness you picked up, Larry Dolan.

KATE (WALKING THREATENINGLY TOWARDS TOM AS HE SITS ON THE END OF THE TABLE) :—Witness ! Me a witness ? (STRIKING THE MARRIAGE AGREEMENT A VIGOROUS THUMP ON THE TABLE, WHEREAT TOM JUMPS ON TO HIS FEET) :—I'd see the pair of you swinging from the gallows before I'd put my name to that.

LARRY (TAKING KATE BY THE ARM, SOOTHINGLY) :— Be reasonable, now, Kate, like a good girl.

KATE (FLINGING AWAY FROM HIM) :—Out of my sight with you.

LARRY (BRIDLING) :—You needn't be so high and mighty at all over it. The curate himself isn't making any great bones about it.

KATE (SARCASTICALLY) :—Isn't he, now ? Is it going to belie the priest, too, you are ?

LARRY (HEATEDLY) :—There's no belying at all about it. I went to him myself. He says he'll marry them.

KATE :—Did you tell him about the state of the man's legs ?

LARRY :—I did, plump and plain.

TOM :—What call have you to be talking about the state of the man's legs ?

KATE :—The call of a neighbour and an orphan's protector.

TOM :—I'd like to know what his legs have to say to you ?

KATE :—I'll show you and his legs up to the world—and to his wife.

LARRY :—It isn't you we're asking to marry him.

KATE :—'Tisn't you or your like anyway I'd have making my match. None of your topcoats and deluderment for me.

LARRY :—What do you know about topcoats and deluderment I'd like to know.

KATE :—I know more than you fancy, Larry Dolan.

TOM :—Where did you get your news and knowledge, is it any harm to ask ?

KATE :—If you want to know 'twas from Mrs. Larry Dolan.

LARRY (SHOCKED) :—Herself !

KATE MULVANY :—Yes, herself. Did you conceit, now, that one woman could keep the like of that from another woman ?

LARRY :—After I warning her !

TOM :—You can't trust any woman.

KATE :—Don't mind the women, you. 'Twould be fitter for you be (LOOKING SIGNIFICANTLY AT LARRY) watching the men that are on for deceiving you.

LARRY :—Whist, Kate, whist.

KATE :—Look here, Tom O'Connor, do you fancy Larry Dolan is going to let you pawn off your misfortunate brother on his neice ?

LARRY :—For goodness sake hold your tongue, woman.

KATE :—I'm only beginning with the tongue. I'll lacerate the pair of you.

TOM :—What are you driving at now ?

KATE :—I'm driving the matchmakers on before me like I'd drive a fox out of a hen-house.

LARRY :—That'll do you now. Sit down, Kate, and don't be annoying yourself. It's all over and done. As I was saying about the widow Dwyer's mare——

KATE :—Don't mind the widow Dwyer's mare. Here you are now, the pair of you, going to pawn off a bandy-legged, decent man on a woman that hasn't

a hand to her body but the one—and that her kithogue.

LARRY (RUNNING FOR KATE) :—Out of my house !

TOM (HOLDING HIM BACK) :—Hold on for a bit, hold on. What's this you're saying ?

LARRY :—Don't listen to her ! The woman is daft !

KATE (COMPOSING HERSELF COOLY) :—Don't I look like one that'd be daft ? What I say, Tom O'Connor, is Gospel. Mary Noonan has———

LARRY :—Out with you ! Don't listen to her.

KATE :—Mary Noonan, the creature, has but one hand to her body.

TOM :—Is this true, Larry Dolan ?

LARRY DOLAN (WALKING TO THE FIRE AND POKING IT VICIOUSLY) :—Don't be tormenting me.

KATE :—He can't deny it. That's why he has her in the cloak.

TOM :—You're a scoundrel, Dolan.

LARRY (FACING TOM) :—Isn't she good enough for him ?

TOM :—I'll have the law over it with you.

LARRY :—Do your best. Didn't you think I was a great fool, now, to take your bandy-legged brother ?

TOM :—You're nothing but a mean low man.

LARRY :—You're breed was always bad.

KATE :—Now we'll hear it. The fat's in the fire.

TOM :—I'd think very little of kicking you into the street.

LARRY :—You might be the first out yourself.

KATE :—Six of one and half-a-dozen of another.

TOM (SNATCHING THE AGREEMENT FROM THO TABLE, TEARING IT UP AND THROWING THE PIECES AT HIM) : —You're no more than a tinker, a mean tinker that'd be going the road and ready to marry the first woman that'd jump the budget with him.

LARRY :—Wasn't it one of your cousins that we had down to sweep the chimney last week ?

TOM (SHAKING HIS FIST FIERCELY AT LARRY) :—I'd let you know that, you hound.

LARRY (ABOUT TO PEEL OFF HIS COAT) :—Stand out from me if you're fit.

KATE (GOING BETWEEN THEM) :—I knew you'd be into it. That's the way with the like of you always. But you haven't heard all the story yet.

LARRY (HITCHING BACK HIS COAT) :—I've enough of your story. There couldn't be luck or grace where the like of you is.

TOM :—I want to hear all the story out.

LARRY :—What is she but a meddlesome old chin-whacker ?

KATE (LAUGHING) :—Oh, then, 'twas I was glad to see this day coming, Larry Dolan.

TOM :—Tell us the rest of the story if you have it. I want to be out of this house quicker than I came into it.

LARRY :—You can take the shortest road you can find.

KATE :—There's many a one in the parish that knows of your conduct as well as me.

LARRY :—Not one. I never opened my mouth to man, woman or child about it.

KATE :—If you didn't open your mouth about it I wasn't so. Below in the forge I told it to all the boys.

TOM :—This is bad work.

LARRY (IN DISTRESS) :—Don't tell me James Deegan was there ?

KATE :—Wasn't he, indeed, and his wife as well. Wait until you see the resolution she drafted out for him to pass at the District Council. Why did you go against him for the chair ?

LARRY :—I'm destroyed above all ever crossed me.

TOM :—If this gets out I'll never be able to speak in the Boardroom again.

KATE :—Out the news will get then. The Editor of the " Moderator " says it'll take up two columns of the paper.

LARRY :—What are you saying at all, woman ?

KATE :—I went into the " Moderator " office on my way through the town and gave them the news. A glass of whiskey they wanted me to take on the head of it.

TOM :—The Lord save us all.

LARRY :—You're one of the biggest whipsters that stands the country.

KATE :—Well, when I left the town up with me to the Resident Magistrate.

LARRY :—I wish you never came down.

KATE :—When I told him of your doings he had like to drop dead of heart disease. "They're in the clutches of the law," says he.

LARRY :—The law?

KATE :—The law, bad and all as it is, can't let the like of you go on malafoostering the people. "I'll have Tom O'Connor," says the Resident Magistrate, "up before me on the bench charged with intent to get cattle from Larry Dolan under false pretences."

LARRY (TO TOM) :—The devil's cure to you.

KATE (TURNING TO TOM, WHO SINKS INTO A CHAIR) :—Six months people do be getting for the like of that, I'm told.

LARRY :—Every day of six months.

KATE :—Hold on now, Larry. "I'll have Larry Dolan," says the Resident Magistrate, "up before me on the bench charged with conspiracy, fraud and corruption."

TOM (RECOVERING) :—That's worse again.

KATE (TURNING TO LARRY, WHO SINKS INTO ANOTHER CHAIR) :—Ten years' penal servitude people do be getting for the like of that.

TOM :—Ten long years is a queer old length of time to be out of house and home.

LARRY (STANDING UP AND WRINGING HIS HANDS) :—Go out of my sight, go out of my sight.

TOM :—Too little ten years is for the like.

KATE :—Picking oakum you'll be, Tom O'Connor.

TOM :—And what will the harvest be if I'm not out?

LARRY :—Rotting in the ground my crops will be.

KATE :—Running on the treadmill you'll be, Larry.

LARRY :—It'll be the death of herself.

KATE :—So the sergeant below in the barrack said.

TOM :—The sergeant in the barrack?

LARRY :—What does he know about it?

KATE :—He knows everything. And the clerk of the petty sessions says it isn't half the price of you.

LARRY :—How could he hear it ?

KATE :—From me. They all heard it from me.

TOM :—But sure you weren't in the barrack ?

KATE :—I was so. I went in and swore an information against you both after leaving the Resident Magistrate.

TOM :—Swore an information ?

KATE :—Faith I did, an information the length of your arm. It's enough to hang the pair of you, not to speak of jailing.

LARRY :—I'm destroyed now entirely.

TOM :—A common informer—that's what you are.

KATE :—But, the Lord between us and harm ! what was it all to the rage the parish priest was in when I told him about the pair of you.

Tom :—The parish priest ?,

LARRY :—Is it Father Dan Noonan ?

KATE :—Och ! Father Dan himself. He got into the tantrums over it.

LARRY :—You wronged us to the priest.

KATE :—No, Larry, but the priest won't let you wrong anyone again in a hurry. He said you nor Tom O'Connor weren't fit to be in any decent parish.

TOM :—What made you draw me into it ?

KATE :—You weren't even Christians, he said. And so, me pair of matchmakers, he's going to excommunicate you.

LARRY (HOLDING ON TO THE TABLE) :—Excommunicate us !

TOM :—This is terrible work.

KATE :—With bell, book and candle it'll be done.

LARRY :—Hadn't I the misfortune !

TOM :—Bitter bad luck to that topcoat, anyway, and the first day I ever saw it.

KATE :—All in the parish, and nine parishes every side of it, will be coming to see the banishing.

TOM :—It was the devil put the thought of that topcoat into my head.

LARRY :—And it was you put the thought of that cloak into my head.

KATE :—Like St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland it'll be.

LARRY :—Where can a man like me face for after the like ?

KATE :—It'll be a warning to the whole world.

LARRY :—I'm an innocent man ! 'Twas you, O'Connor, led me into destruction.

TOM :—Don't be annoying me. Tormented I am this day.

KATE :—Your relations are to be pitied, for when you die you'll be refused Christian burial.

LARRY (BLAZING UP AND THREATENINGLY WAVING HER OUT) :—Out of my house !

KATE (SETTING BACK FROM HIM) :—Spare yourself for the treadmill, Laurence Joseph Jarlath Francis Sylvester.

TOM (THREATENING HER FROM THE OTHER SIDE) :—Out of the man's house !

KATE (SHAKING HER FIST IN HIS FACE, AT WHICH HE SETS BACK FROM HER) :—The plank bed is long your due.

LARRY :—You're an evil disturber.

KATE :—The sergeant made out the summons before I left.

TOM :—You're an informer.

KATE :—The magistrate signed the warrant.

LARRY :—Blood money you wanted.

KATE :—I left word with the patrol for fear you'd skedaddle.

TOM :—A spy you are.

KATE :—They're lying in ambush outside.

LARRY :—Dublin Castle is your place.

KATE :—The carman is ready to drive you to the bridewell.

LARRY :—Out of my house.

KATE :—Tarred and feathered by the boys at the forge.

TOM :—Throw her out.

KATE :—They'll be singing songs about you at the fairs.

LARRY (TAKING A CHAIR AND POKING THE LEGS OF IT AT HER) :—Out this minute.

KATE :—Penny ballads we'll have it all in.

TOM (TAKING ANOTHER CHAIR AT HER) :—Drive her out.

KATE :—James Deegan's resolution in every Council Chamber in Ireland.

LARRY :—Out before I take your life.

KATE :—Kettled from the jail gate.

TOM :—Out !

KATE :—The dogs set at your heels.

LARRY :—I'll put the chair through you.

KATE :—Buried in the ground like the beasts of the field.

(TOM AND LARRY CLOSE IN UPON HER CRYING "BEGONE !" SHE IS NEAR THE DOOR. KATE RAISES HER ARM AND SHOUTS "HEATHENS ! HEATHENS ! BACK FROM ME !" SHE FIERCELY FACES THEM, WHEREAT LARRY SETS BACK TO FIREPLACE AND TOM TO DRESSER, KATE IS STANDING IN CENTRE OF KITCHEN).

KATE (SCORNFULLY) :—Don't lay hands on a Christian woman. (SHE STAMPS HER FOOT, WHEREAT THEY COWER). Dogs !

(SHE WHEELS ROUND AND WALKS OUT THE DOOR TRIUMPHANTLY).

LARRY (SINKING TO A CHAIR) :—I'm not worth a farthing, Tom O'Connor.

TOM (LEANING AGAINST DRESSER) :—I felt the two pins going from under me.

LARRY (DEJECTEDLY) :—And I haven't the heart to drive you from my house.

TOM :—Is it drive me into the arms of the patrol you'd do.?

LARRY :—I haven't the heart. (MISERABLY). Fellow-feeling makes the world wondrous kind.

TOM :—If it does, Larry, 'twould be a charity to give me a drop of drink.

LARRY :—Sure the sun is in the heavens yet.

TOM :—Sun, moon and stars are blotted out of the sky for me from this day.

LARRY (RISING AND GOING TOWARDS ROOM DOOR) :—My own throat is dry as a board. There's refreshment in the room.

(A NOISE IS HEARD OUTSIDE. LARRY STOPS, LISTENING).

TOM :—What is that ?

LARRY :—Maybe it's the police.

TOM :—That sergeant Carroll is a holy terror for cases.

LARRY :—Slap out the door.

(THEY RUN TOWARDS THE DOOR. MRS. DOLAN, MARY AND SEAN ENTER. THE MATCHMAKERS FALL BACK).

MRS. DOLAN :—What's the hullabaloo about ?

LARRY (WRINGING HIS HANDS GOING TO A CHAIR BESIDE FIRE) :—O Mary Ellen, Mary Ellen ! What'll become of us at all this day ?

MARY :—Something has surely happened ?

MRS. DOLAN :—And where is Kate Mulvany ?

LARRY :—Destruction she has brought on the top of us.

TOM (LAYING HIS HEAD ON HIS HANDS ON THE DRESSER) : —Warrants out for our arrest.

SEAN :—What in the name of goodness ails them ?

LARRY :—The summonses made out.

TOM :—The patrol lying in ambush outside.

SEAN :—God bless the hearers.

LARRY :—The boys at the forge getting tar and feathers.

TOM :—The editor of the " Moderator " putting us in the paper.

MARY :—Out of their reason they are.

TOM :—Songs over us at the fairs.

LARRY :—Denounced by James Deegan's resolution in public meeting assembled.

MRS. DOLAN :—What in the name of thunder come over them ?

TOM :—Kettled from the jail gate.

LARRY :—The dogs set after us.

SEAN :—Is it hydrophobia they have ?

TOM :—Flying from the shores of Ireland.

MRS. DOLAN :—The Lord protect us.

TOM :—Exile and misfortune.

LARRY :—Bell, book and candlelight.

MARY :—Give them a drink of something.

TOM :—Crops rotting in the ground.

LARRY :—Bills coming due in the bank.

SEAN :—The brain is turned in their heads.
TOM :—Up before the Resident Magistrate.
LARRY :—An information the length of your arm.
MRS. DOLAN :—Ought I to throw cold water on them?
TOM :—Handcuffs ready and a car to drive to the bridewell.
LARRY :—Picking oakum and walking the treadmill.
MRS. DOLAN :—I'd best be going for the priest and doctor.
LARRY :—The priest won't leave us in the parish.
TOM :—Penal servitude and excommunication.
MRS. DOLAN :—They're mad as March hares.
TOM :—Denied Christian burial when we're no more.
LARRY :—No marriage and no fat cattle.
MARY (CLOSING IN BY SEAN'S SIDE) :—No marriage!
TOM :—Home to Derrybrien, Sean, without one to go with you.
SEAN :—No, faith. Mary will be in Derrybrien with me. I'd like to see the man that'd go between us.
LARRY :—We deceived you, Sean.
TOM :—And we deceived you, Mary.
MARY :—Is it me not to know about Sean's legs?
SEAN :—And me not to know about Mary's hand?

(THE MATCHMAKERS ARE THUNDERSTRUCK. MARY AND SEAN LAUGH CONTENTEDLY AT EACH OTHER).

MRS. DOLAN :—The match was well made.
LARRY :—The match made?
TOM :—Who in thunder made it?

(KATE MULVANY APPEARS AT DOOR. SHE STANDS THERE WITH HER HEAD A LITTLE TO ONE SIDE, LOOKING DOWN DEMURELY. THEY ALL TURN ROUND AND GAZE AT HER).

MRS. DOLAN :—Kate herself that made it.
TOM AND LARRY TOGETHER :—Kate Mulvany!
KATE (COMING SLOWLY FROM DOOR TO CENTRE) :—I did in throth. Did you conceit, Tom O'Connor, and did you conceit, Larry Dolan, that I was going to put up with this? Did you conceit I was going to stand the playing off of a decent man on a decent girl? When I heard your game up I came to Mary.

I told her all about Sean. "Well," says she, "if Sean O'Connor had fifty bandy legs under him every day in the year he's well fit for the first lady in the land." When I heard that I footed it to Sean O'Connor. "Well," says he, when he heard my story. "Well," he, says "I saw many men going to the marriage rails, and I only saw one with a smile upon his face. He was an American that left a leg and an arm in a railway smash!" That was the beginning of it. Before the week was out the pair of them were moping up the borheen plucking primroses. But we all kept our minds to ourselves. We thought we might as well have the last laugh at the matchmakers. Sure it's ready to split we are at all the antics and play-acting of the matchmakers.

(THEY ALL LAUGH, POINTING FINGERS OF DERISION AT THE MATCHMAKERS).

LARRY (EAGERLY):—And the parish priest wasn't saying anything about excommunication?

KATE (LOOKING LARRY UP AND DOWN SCORNFULLY):—Is it excommunicating the like of you Father Dan Noonan would be? High hanging to your impudence, Larry Dolan! You wouldn't be worth the burning of a ha'penny dip.

LARRY (WITH A DEEP SIGH OF RELIEF):—There's a ton weight lifted off my heart.

TOM (MOPPING HIS FACE WITH A RED HANDKERCHIEF):—I feel like Daniel when he came out of the lion's den.

MARY:—You were a nice parcel of thimble-players. But we'll let bygones be bygones.

TOM:—And there I tore up the agreement. What kind are the cattle, Sean?

SEAN:—How do I know? I didn't look twice at them.

MRS. DOLAN:—All his eyes were for Mary. Sure it's a love match entirely.

KATE:—When people cotton to each other like Sean and Mary a leg or an arm here or there makes no great odds.

LARRY :—There won't be one half as welcome to the marriage as yourself Kate.

KATE (STEPPING BOLDLY INTO CENTRE OF GROUP) :— You invite me to the marriage, to Mary's marriage ? What assurance you have, Larry Dolan ! I'll be at the marriage on my own invitation. It was me that made the match.

(CURTAIN).

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